

Director's Report

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**HIGHER
EDUCATION**
COORDINATING BOARD

Legislature moving ahead on supplemental budget proposals

By Marc Gaspard

As the Legislature completes the second month of the 2003 session, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the Board members who have spent time meeting with legislators and participating in committee meetings and work sessions. Your efforts are enormously helpful in illustrating the challenges that face higher education today, and your work is greatly appreciated.

The Legislature's first cut-off is

March 5: the last day for most bills to be reported out of their house of origin. The cutoff for fiscal and transportation committee legislation is March 10. Within a couple of weeks, we will have a better idea of priority legislation in both the House and Senate.

On Friday, the House passed its supplemental budget by a vote of 94-1. Covering the last three months of the fiscal year that ends June 30, the House budget includes a number of cost-cutting measures that some legislators

say are the first step toward erasing a \$2.4 billion deficit. Like the Senate version passed earlier, the House budget borrows heavily from Gov. Gary Locke's proposed spending cuts. Both the House and Senate versions would begin the cuts immediately.

HECB responds to Davey v. Locke ruling

As a result of a ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last fall, the HECB recently notified colleges and universities across the state about a major change in financial aid distribution.

GEAR UP in line for continued federal funding

President Bush has requested a sixth year of funding for GEAR UP projects first funded in 1999. Projects that would be eligible for this sixth year include the Washington state GEAR UP project and four local Washington partnerships: Pierce College, the Renton School District, Yakima Valley (UW), and Pasco.

The White House backing, coupled with bipartisan congressional support for GEAR UP, bodes well for sixth-year funding. Although we will probably not know the outcome of federal budget maneuvering until this fall, program staffers are cautiously planning for 2004-5 projects.

No provisions have been made for sixth-year support for awardees first funded in 2000 and beyond, but it is probably safe to assume that if first-year awardees receive a sixth year, Congress and the president will address later grantees in future budgets or in reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (expected in late 2004).

Washington programs funded in 2000 or later are Heritage College, UW (Seattle), The Evergreen State College, Wenatchee, CWU, and WSU.



The court ruling, a result of *Davey v. Locke*, requires the HECB to provide financial aid to qualified students who choose to study theology. The court said the state statute prohibiting payment of state financial aid to students pursuing degrees in theology violated the First Amendment's religious-freedom provision. The HECB had relied on state law that prohibits financial aid awards to students who pursue a degree in theology.

Because the law applies to all Washington state financial aid programs, the HECB has directed colleges and universities to process aid requests for eligible students retroactive to fall 2002.

The HECB is working with the Governor's Office and the state Attorney General's Office on whether to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

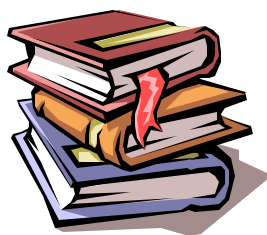
State Work Study pays a visit to employers, schools

School representatives had a chance to compare notes and discuss State Work Study issues with their colleagues at a series of regional meetings convened by State Work Study developer **Mary Gsell** in February. A gathering at Antioch University included Seattle and Bellevue Schools, while another in Olympia involved Centralia and Grays Harbor Community Colleges. and St. Martin's College.

In Bellingham, Mary invited *Whatcom County Business Pulse* reporter Christopher Key to participate in a discussion on work study issues. The invitation paid off: Key said the newspaper intends to do a series of articles focusing on the student employment program at each of the schools. Included in the Bellingham regional meeting were representatives from Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom and Skagit Community Colleges, Northwest Indian College and Western Washington University.

SWS staff also have met with a number of employers recently, including Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Fidelity Accounting, the Tacoma Housing Authority and the King County Dispute Resolution Center. Employer visits help everyone stay up to date on program requirements.

One-on-one training for new SWS administrators and a bit of updating for experienced staff are a key part of school visits. Recently visited colleges include Clark, Lower Columbia, Pierce and Tacoma Community.



Washington Scholars named for 2003

The selection committee for the Washington Scholars Program met in Spokane last week to select 147 Washington Scholars and 49 alternates. This year's ceremony will be held May 15 at the Red Lion Inn and Suites in Olympia.

The program honors the accomplishments of three high school seniors from each of the state's 49 legislative districts. Washington Scholars receive state grants equal to up to four years of undergraduate resident tuition that can be used at any Washington public or independent college or university.

Staff news

For the fourth year, state GEAR UP director **John McLain** joined the faculty of GEAR UP capacity building workshops, sponsored by the National Center for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP). John was part of a team of 20 program administrators who trained nearly 700 GEAR UP professionals in Phoenix earlier this month. The Ford and Kellogg foundations paid for the trip.

Karen Durant, associate director for human resources policy, has joined the newly created Governor's Labor Relations office, which is charged with implementing the full-scope collective bargaining legislation that passed during the 2002 legislative session. **Barbara Dunn**, communications director, has moved to Selma, Alabama to become director of marketing and public relations at Vaughan Regional Medical Center.

Kris Betker is filling in for Barbara until the HECB hires a permanent replacement. Kris came from Seattle Public Schools and has worked with the Legislature and Governor's Office.

GET program update as of Jan. 31, 2003



Current active accounts: 26,485

Total new enrollment for 2002-03: 2,429

Total units purchased: 5.48 million

Total payments received: \$177.8 million

Total value of accounts: \$246.7 million
(includes future payments expected)

Enrollment ends March 31, 2003;
will re-open September 15, 2003.